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25 TAKE LIE TESTS AS PENTAGON SEEKS DISCLOSURE SOURCE

But Inquiry Fails to Determine Who Gave Information on Spending to the Press

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 — The Defense Department has given lie-detector tests to about 25 senior officials in an unsuccessful effort to find the source of an unauthorized disclosure of confidential information, according to Pentagon officials.

The lie-detector, or polygraph, tests were begun by Deputy Secretary of Defense Frank C. Carlucci, who took the first one himself. They were given to Under Secretaries Fred C. Ikle and Richard D. Delauer; Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman and other military service secretaries; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. David C. Jones; other four-star generals and admirals, and several Assistant Secretaries of Defense and their aides.

Figure Based on 'Wish Lists'

The tests and other inquiries, however, have not uncovered the official or officials who gave the press an account of a policy debate in a high-level meeting at the Pentagon earlier this month. Officially, the investigation continues, but Pentagon officials said they had little hope of discovering the source of the information.

At a meeting of the Defense Resources Board on Jan. 7, according to Government officials, Mr. Delauer asserted that the United States would have to spend up to \$750 billion more than the \$1,500 billion planned by the Reagan Administration to reach its objective of fully rearming the United States.

Secretary of Defense Casper W. Weinberger said later that the \$750 billion figure had been compiled from "wish lists" submitted by the military services. He said the Administration would

stay on the military spending course set over the past year.

He also said that the investigation of the disclosure had caused a "very distasteful, very unhappy situation" but defended it as necessary in the effort to stop disclosures. Other officials have been reluctant to discuss the issue except anonymously.

After the news reports appeared two weeks ago, Mr. Carlucci volunteered to take a lie-detector test and asked others who had attended the meeting to do the same. One official said Mr. Carlucci "is steeped in the ways" of the Central Intelligence Agency, of which he was deputy director in the Carter Administration. "Taking polygraphs over there is like having breakfast," he said.

The lie-detector tests, officials said, have raised these questions within the Pentagon:

¶How effective are lie detectors and other investigative methods in finding the source of a disclosure? If the person who made the disclosure cannot be found, how good are other security measures within the Pentagon?

¶Will the use of lie detectors to question the principal civilian advisers of the Secretary of Defense and the nation's senior military officers cause an erosion of trust among them, or do unauthorized disclosures of information from supposedly free-flowing and confidential discussions do more to erode that sense of trust?

¶How serious is the leakage of information from the Pentagon and have any of the disclosures done real damage to national security? The various grades of classified information are based on the amount of potential damage to national security.

On the first question, officials acknowledged that the lie detectors had limited value. Others shrugged off the Reagan Administration's campaign to stop such disclosures. "Leaks are the name of the game around here," said one official, asserting that there were no more than in previous administrations.

On the second issue, Pentagon officials said no one had declined Mr. Carlucci's request to take the lie-detector test. They argued further that disclosures stemming from confidential discussions would do more to erode trust than the lie-detector tests, despite the implication that the word of the officials could not be taken at face value.

As for the third issue, top officials in the Pentagon have declined to specify damage done to national security. Asked whether there really had been a

"hemorrhage" of information, as President Reagan has asserted, one official said: "Well, maybe hemorrhage is too strong a word. Let's call it a steady drip."

In the President's directive setting out his intention to stop disclosures, the key phrase was the "unauthorized disclosure of classified information." Pentagon officials acknowledged, at least privately, that authorized disclosures were still permitted.

An example of that was the Pentagon publication of the booklet "Soviet Military Power," a 99-page assessment, complete with pictures and charts, of the growth of the Soviet armed forces. It was published after a struggle between Mr. Weinberger and the intelligence community. Mr. Weinberger wanted to use secret information about the Soviet Union to help build a consensus for increased military spending. Intelligence officers balked at releasing classified information.

The result was a compromise in which previously classified information was made public, some of it in exact form, some in slightly altered form, in an effort to deceive the Soviet Union as to precisely what American intelligence knows.

The booklet contained, for instance, previously secret pictures of the new Alfa submarine, the world's fastest, and of a Backfire bomber that officials suggested had been taken from a satellite. An artist's rendering of the Typhoon submarine, the world's largest, was doctored slightly, as was an artist's rendering of an SS-20 missile being fired.